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ABSTRACT

The Academic Skills Center at Black Hills State University provides a peer assistance program comprising both individual tutoring in classes offered in each academic division and credit classes in study skills. The goal of the Center is to respond effectively and quickly to individual educational needs of students and faculty through a cost-effective, flexible, open-door program. Some of its 10 goals are to: work directly with instructors and students to conquer test anxiety; provide computer assisted study skill instruction for students; and provide an atmosphere of learning and self-improvement for tutors. Peer tutors are upper division students who have earned good grades and can implement appropriate interpersonal skills. All tutors submit a report to the division chair of the division for which they tutor. Sample tutor reports are provided. Study skill and development classes are offered for credit at the school. Objectives include: helping students understand the academic, personal, and social adjustments that college requires; motivating them toward developing more efficient study skills and effective academic values; and improving self direction through the development of more meaningful academic behavior and motivation. Each class is instructed by a team of two students. Suggestions for others interested in launching a peer tutoring center include: be willing to try the impossible; seek criticism and new ideas from peers and tutors; and share reports and successes with the administration. (SM)

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ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER PROGRAM

-Peer Tutoring
-Study Skills Classes
-Academic Assistance

BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY*
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March 1, 1989

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

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Abstract

The Academic Skills Center at Black Hills State University (previously known as the institution's Development Center) provides a peer assistance program comprising both individual tutoring in classes offered in each academic division and credit classes in study skills. This report first discusses the peer tutoring concept including tutor selection, anecdotal impressions of the Center by tutors, and reports by tutors made to academic chairpersons. Distinct services provided by the Center are also reviewed including community tutoring and residence hall tutoring. Described also are alternate services including group review sessions, test anxiety reduction sessions, and General Education Development (GED) testing.

The second portion of this report examines classroom instruction in study skills and includes an overview of class content, the results of a student and a faculty study of program effectiveness, and a synthesis of programmatic outcomes. The study concludes with recommendations for establishing or maintaining a similar center on other campuses.

Introduction to the Report

The Academic Skills Center began on the Black Hills State University campus in 1969 with one desk, one coffee pot, two tables, some homemade dividers, one math tutor, one business tutor and the enthusiasm of a few dedicated faculty who thought the institution should do more to promote student success. Almost twenty years later, the Center has grown to house 19 peer tutors representing all of the institution's academic divisions, 8 student study skill class instructors, and an assistant director. Ten years ago, the Center served 297 students. Last year, over 1000 found assistance and the University added peer tutor positions in University residence halls.

What brought about these quantitative measures of success? This study seeks to answer this question and to provide a means for other institutions to gain from the Black Hills State University experience. This report was developed for submission to the model programs inventory project sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) for possible inclusion within the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system. In pursuing this goal, this report also has allowed Black Hills State to gauge the contributions of the Academic Skills Center to the institution's mission.

A central feature of this report is the presentation of tutor impressions of their experience within the Center. Such anecdotal reflections of students who have served institutions in formal tutoring and academic assistance roles are largely overlooked in the literature.

Center Goals and Objectives

Black Hills State University pursues a liberal admission policy under which lower achievers and GED candidates are admitted to the University's junior college program. The mean ACT score for those students under 21 years who are required to submit their results was 17.2 in the Fall of 1989, not statistically different from either the national average nor different for other 4-year public institutions offering Master's degrees. Students admitted to the junior college program frequently score lower that the institutional average and present perhaps a greater academic challenge to the institution than students granted regular admission status.

Black Hills State is located in western South Dakota in a community of about 10,000 and 50 miles from the second largest city in the state, Rapid City. Most younger students enter the institution from rural backgrounds and research has shown their attitudes toward education to be qualitatively different from other liberal admission 4-year institutions in the United States. This research, summarized elsewhere, indicates that, on the whole, first-time freshmen entering Black Hills State are less academically confident than their counterparts at

similar institutions. This forms the conceptual basis for the continued existence of the Academic Skills Center and underlies the Center's objectives.

The University's programs are demanding and it can be demonstrated that its general education program accounts for substantial individual gain. Thus, Black Hills State students change dramatically during their time within the institution and, regardless of admission status, it is in the University's best interest to assist all students to meet the challenges inherent in the curricula. The University is dedicated to the principle that when students are admitted, regardless of ability level, a responsibility to provide a possibility of reaching their educational goals is accrued. Any other course would be a tremendous waste of human potential and would lessen the institution's commitment to investment in students.

The Center assists the successful student who attempts to gain an even higher standard. The success of the Center lies in the perception that one does not have to be academically disadvantaged to find assistance there. It was with this fact in mind the Center was renamed the Academic Skills Center in in July, 1988.

The overall goal of the Center is to respond effectively and quickly to the individual educational needs of University students and faculty, through a cost-effective, flexible, open-door program of peer tutoring and program referral. The following objectives are subsumed under this goal.

Objectives.

1. To provide exemplary peer tutoring for course work offered by all academic entities.

2. To provide assistance in setting college goals and choosing appropriate majors through inventories and advisement.

3. To assist the institution in reducing attrition through peer support and application of both peer counseling and counseling referral.

4. To assist teaching faculty to maintain high standards in their classes through tutoring and constant communication.

5. To seek administrative, faculty, and student input and evaluation at all times to assure adequacy of services.

6. To work directly with instructors and concerned students to conquer test anxiety.

7. To provide computer assisted study skill instruction for interested students.

8. To provide semester reports to all Division Chairs for assistance in evaluation of tutoring and curriculum purposes.

9. To assist motivated, high-achieving students to maintain their high standards through tutoring, counseling and advisement.

10. To provide an atmosphere of learning and self-improvement for tutors by delegating responsibility to them whenever appropriate so that they may become active participants in their own learning and, by so doing, gain valuable experience.

The Center is not just a place to keep students from failing, but, rather, is a place to reinforce their academic skills. Since all revenue for the Center is raised through student fees, all students have access to the services. A 1987 survey showed that the Center serves just as many "B" students as students with deficient grades. Peer tutors delight in assisting all students to enhance their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. This fact disabuses the notion that "only the losers go in that place." Our faculty is concerned with the development of all students and the Center a place where all students can be challenged according to their ability.

Section 1
Description of the Peer Tutoring Program

Selection of Peer Tutors

Peer tutors are upper division students, juniors and seniors, who have earned good grades, and who are able to implement appropriate interpersonal skills. They vary in ages and approaches to the enormous task of tutoring, but they must be able to demonstrate accountability in their work. The Center suggests that clothing appropriate to a professional role be worn. Suggestions about what to wear usually are taken seriously and, to date, has not created a problem.

Peer tutor positions are advertised the semester before openings occur. The turnover rate is low because most tutors stay with the Center until graduation or student teaching. An applicant review period of two weeks is suggested, allowing faculty and chairpersons sufficient time to screen and hire applicants before finals week and enabling the Center to notify prospective tutors before the semester ends. The latter condition allows tutors to plan their personal and academic schedules better.

Applications are picked up from the Center director and turned into the divisions. Applications are ranked and returned to the director who then interviews candidates, notifying all applicants of the outcome either personally or by telephone. Those not selected are thanked for their interest and, where appropriate, are encouraged to reapply. The director relies heavily on divisional preferences for tutors, ensuring the feeling of influence and support by the professors.

Samples of applications for both the tutors and student instructors may be found in the appendices to this document (notice that a transcript has to be attached). Although not possible to depict in this document, all materials are color coded for ease of organization.

New tutors are given training dates which will occur as soon as they return the next semester. The training is done by the director and returning tutors. Training topics include, expectations and responsibilities, student learning styles, resources available in the Center, and confidentiality of student records. After assuming their duties, tutors are required to meet with faculty in their division on a periodic basis. Tutors usually tutor in their major, but occasionally the Center accepts a tutor with strong achievement in their minor.

Tutors are paid $3.75 an hour. They do <u>not</u> have to qualify for federal work study. However some do and this policy helps the budget. The University's Financial Aid Office handles payroll and prevents complications from occurring in the financial aid packages of some tutors. The Center

director, however, keeps detailed records to determine what each student has earned. Tutors work on the average of 12 hours per week. Experience has shown that time less than 10 hours is unproductive for both the tutor and the Center.

Tutors' Summaries and Reports

Business and computer summaries. As the percentage of business and computer majors in our college increases, so does our Business and Computer Components of the Developmental program. This+ component covers a broader range of subjects than other components in our program. Consequently, these five tutors are highly specialized in specific areas within the business and computer field. Because of the diversity of our tutors, we are able to help students with computer programming and application, accounting (both upper and lower level), economics, business finance, federal income tax, cost accounting, business and report writing, and business law.

While ages, major emphasis of study, activity interest, and methods of tutoring differ among our five division tutors, a common factor is that each of us have experience, concern, knowledge, and a sense of excitement in and about the world of business. We all find it rewarding to be able to pass the knowledge we have gained from our experience at college on to fellow students.

We found this year that participation in intradivisional meetings results in many beneficial resolutions that furthered our effectiveness as tutors. At our group meetings we each decided which specific areas within our field we felt most comfortable in tutoring. For example, one tutor excelled in present value accounting, while another preferred working capital and financial statement preparation, and yet another liked the area of bond discounts and premiums. When students come in, they are referred to tutors based on area of need. Of course, if a student preferred a particular tutor, that tutor would help the student.

Another very important result of our group meetings was the resolution to visit all of the instructors within our area at least once every two weeks. By doing this, we are able to keep abreast of classroom activities and of individual student's progress.

Verbal reports from the tutors have revealed a tremendous success rate, with 100 percent of all students who returned to the center declaring an improved grasp of the subject which was reflected by an improved grade. The students have responded well to the development program, and we are excited by the results.

Looking to the future, we all agree that study sessions before tests are a main objective for next semester. Another objective is student awareness--making students aware of our services. We have composed a letter to be enclosed with new students' admission packets, advising them of services

available and encouraging them to come in and visit with us at any time. (Leone Geppert, May 1985)

The business division tutors assist students in the following areas: accounting I and II, intermediate accounting I and II, cost accounting, Federal Income Tax, finance, statistics, economics, management, business law I and II, marketing, and computer sources. Tutors are available during their posted hours as well as additional times if a student's schedule does not fit the regular hours.

Many students make an appointment or simply drop in when a problem in their area arises. The tutors generally work one-on-one with students or assist several people in a small group. The tutors also hold pre-test study sessions by the request of the teacher.

There is a wide range of ages that come in for assistance. Some students are recent high school graduates while others are returning to the educational field after a lapse of many years. It is interesting for the tutors to get to know these individuals and gratifying to be able to help them with problem areas.

Tutoring is beneficial to the student as well as to the tutor. It enables the tutor to brush up on classes taken in the past while at the same time aiding the students. Diane Cummings, Paula Greenfield, Renay Krusfer, and John Peters, February, 1989)

English summaries. The English component of the developmental program reaches a broader range of students than other components. The services of our four English tutors are available to any student with questions about speaking or writing. We are frequently asked to help with writing on a variety of subjects and almost as frequently we are able to help.

The reasons for this gratifying ability rests with the individual tutors, our supervisor's thorough and personal screening and selection process, and also with fate. Our English tutors for the spring of 1985 possess a combination of experience and training that allows us to serve our clients well.

The senior tutor (two years at the Development Center) is an English and speech and theater major who edits the college yearbook. Two of the tutors have worked at the center one year each. One of them is pursuing majors in history, English, journalism and secondary education. He has business training, is well-versed in computer science and word processing, and she or he is copy editor of the yearbook. The other, at 20, is our youngest tutor. She is an English and history major and a member of the College's debate team. Our newest tutor is also the oldest at 43. She is an English and

journalism student and a professional newspaper reporter. She writes for the college yearbook and newspaper.

All tutors are active writers and speakers. We have first-hand experience and a vital interest in the language problems that are brought to us. It has become obvious to us and our supervisor that this is a fortunate situation giving our cross-curricular clientele an excellent change to profit from our services.

Each of us "draws" particular types of students who prefer us for personal reasons. Except those instructors who specify a tutor, clients are encouraged to sample us and choose the tutor they like best.

Although our backgrounds are different, as tutors we have similar methodologies. Our tutoring is personalized and holistic. If specific directions do not come from their instructors, clients' needs are analyzed using available writing samples. This analysis includes informal, personal evaluations:

-Does this student want to learn to write, or does she or he want his paper edited?
-Is she or she or he here to improve his work or to cover up a half-hearted effort?
-Is she or he mainly lacking education or motivation?
-How often, and what, does she or he read or write?
-What language skills is she or he using successfully, and where is she or he floundering?
-Does she or he understand the vocabulary of grammar, or will she or he be put off by words such as "gerund" or "participle?"
-Does she or he need help with mechanical problems, with organization or with style?
-What is she or he trying to say in his writing?
-Is she or he optimistic about improving his skills or is she or he confused and discouraged?

We do not withhold our services from anyone, but this evaluation is necessary because we are pledged against writing <u>for</u> our clients. We try to educate them by writing <u>with</u> them, acting as sounding-boards, helpful proofreaders and gentle editors. As one of our tutors put it, "I can usually help the paper, but it's tougher to help the student."

Teaching aids are available to us; we rarely use them. What students want and appreciate most is our undivided, personal attention,. We accept walk-ins between scheduled appointments. We set no limits on duration, frequency or number of visits--an advantage we enjoy because of the modest size of our school.

For our own reference we rely chiefly on a punctuation guide written by one of the English professors. We distribute several hundred of them each year. The Little, Brown Handbook is the department's preferred textbook, and we use it in our tutoring. The Gregg Reference Manual is our authority for

business writing. We also consult the AP Stylebook almost as frequently as we do Webster's Dictionary.

At the end of every semester, each tutor submits to our supervisor and the Communications Division Chairman, a report detailing the number and types of students tutored. Other Comments or observations are included at the discretion of the tutors.

Individually and through our supervisor, we communicate often with the English faculty. We are fortunate to have friendly as well as professional relationships with many of the instructors. We discuss our problems and successes with them. We are able, in this way, to provide clients with specialized and intensive help that compliments the instructors' efforts.

Statistical evaluation of our effectiveness is difficult. We work to avoid any suggestion of guaranteed grades; mostly we do not know what grades our clients are receiving. We simply concentrate on improvement within the abilities of the students. Sometimes we can help; sometimes we can't, but we always try.

Many students visit us only once or twice. Others come in frequently but randomly according to their needs. Each of us also tutors several "regulars" who require--or desire--our services routinely. Not all of these regulars are deficient in English skills; some are among the best students at this school.

The fact that good students recognize the value of our help speaks well of our component. Faculty members are complimentary and supportive of our work with their students. We serve more clients each year; many of them are vocally appreciative. We learn from our work, and finally, we feel good about what we do.

There is no question that many students are reaching college with underdeveloped language skills. Every tutor helps about 50 students during a semester for an average of two visits. We tutor for 10-12 hours each week, and with four of us working we cannot always make time for everyone. Our services are obviously valuable to students here, and we are proud to be part of a program that helps them stay in school alongside those of us who are better prepared.

A student enters the Academic Skills Center looking for assistance and inquires about getting help with a research paper for Freshmen English 102. He is greeted with a friendly smile. Working with students who need help with research papers, essays, and other writings is just one of our duties as tutors in the Communications Division. In addition to helping students who need help with writing, we also work with students on speeches, resumes, business letters, and individual study skills.

We work with individuals across the curriculum. Not only do we assist students in English, but we also help students

with papers in the following areas: history, psychology, sociology, political science and education. We also get a chance to work with many students who are preparing for the exit exams such as the English Proficiency Exam and the California Achievement Test. We have found that the students who come in to receive help for these exams tend to succeed repeatedly.

As tutors it is also our responsibility to work one-on-one with faculty within the Communications Division. When the semester begins, we visit the freshmen English classes. This gives freshmen a chance to get to know us so they will feel comfortable working with us. Later in the semester we work with the professors to provide group study sessions for various classes.

Our clients are not the only people who benefit from our program. As tutors we not only gain teaching experience, we gain a more enhanced knowledge of our subject matter. The camaraderie among the communications tutors enables us as individuals to benefit from one another's experiences.

The center under the direction of Betty Anderson has become the place where we feel at home. This atmosphere has a positive effect on all who enter the Academic Skills Center. (Sonja Saunders, Katrina Zwetzig, February, 1989)

Science and mathematics summary. The math and science tutors offer assistance in the following subjects: microbiology, biology, botany, earth science, chemistry survey, general chemistry I and II, anatomy, basic and intermediate algebra, college algebra, calculus, trigonometry, math for the elementary teacher, and physics. Students are encouraged to make individual appointments with the tutors. they are also encouraged to "drop in" if they have one or two questions rather than wait for an appointment. Students range in the age from recent high school graduates to ten to twenty years post high school. At all times the tutors try to be open, flexible and non-judgmental.

Textbooks are kept handy for students to use as well as some laboratory samples, i.e. rock samples. Study sessions are given in those areas requested by students or professors. These are usually held for about 45 minutes the week of the exam. Students are continually encouraged to attend class, take accurate notes and drop in to visit with us regarding classes they have questions about. Many students use our Center as a place to study as well as to relax. (Carol Melvin, Melinda Vogele,and Mamadou Diakite, February, 1989)

Social science summaries. God helps those who help themselves. The same can be said of tutors and the students they seek to help. All too often we see a student only once. All too often we see a student who is trying to figure out how to avoid studying. The students we actually do tutor are

those who have already taken the most important step in their academic lives--they are willing to learn how to learn. Indeed, it is primarily this that I teach. "Are you reading your text?" is the first question I ask students. If the answer is negative, I send them home with a reading assignment and an appointment to see me the following day. I give them suggestions on how to read: take notes when reading, look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary, read for about an hour and then take a five minute break, feel free to write in your books and bring all subject matter questions to the next tutoring session. I also make similar recommendations regarding note-taking strategy for class lectures. There are a few students who have already acquired the necessary learning skills and only come to me with questions pertaining to subject matter. But most of the students I deal with have not acquired these skills and, although we speak of the subject matter, it is really the learning skills that I teach. To learn how to read with comprehension, to write with precision and clarity, and to speak with ready eloquence are not only the marks of an educated person but are also the most difficult attributes to acquire. Students know this, of course, and it is no wonder that so many cower in the face of such a task. Indeed, the greater wonder may be that so many come to us in order to undertake such a difficult task at all.

Assuming, then, that tutors are engaged more in the teaching of learning skills than in the teaching of subject matter, I offer the following observations and suggestions. First, the tutor cannot serve as a substitute instructor, for there is no substitute for the instructor-student relationship. We can elaborate and clarify questions involving subject matter, but we cannot teach in one hour per week what the instructor teaches in three hours per week. It is for that reason that I emphasize to the student the importance of class attendance and notetaking. Second, the tutor can serve quite well as a "supporting player" in the instructor-student relationship. She not only can deal with subject matter, but can also serve as a liaison between student and instructor, as a quasi-counselor, as a motivator, and as a confidence-builder. Third, while there is adequate instructor-student and tutor-student interaction I believe that we should work more closely with instructors, and they with us. While such a working relationship does exist with a few of the social science instructors, it does not exist in all cases. Perhaps this is my own fault, but faculty members should be aware of the importance of our supporting role and encourage their students to take advantage of the services offered by the Development Center. Finally, we must somehow encourage students to establish early and regular contact with the tutors. Unlike other divisions, which require weekly or bi-weekly assignment, the social sciences tend to require four examinations per semester. If the student does poorly on the first examination, he or she spend the remainder of the semester trying to make up the deficit. Weekly study

sessions, beginning early in the semester, may offer a viable solution to this problem.

In conclusion, while tutors help those who help themselves, I believe that our priority must be to encourage more students to want to help themselves. Working together, faculty and tutors do a great service on behalf of students and, by increasing retention rates, serve Black Hills State University as well. (Alison M. Roberts, 1985)

Our focus as tutors is to provide individualized assistance to meet the special needs of students. Since each student has different needs, we adapt our techniques to fit the student. Our goals to help students become more successful in their college careers.

We tailor the program to fit the student by providing: one-on-one tutoring, review sessions, conducting library tours, instructing in note taking and study skills and supervising tests for students with special needs. We work closely with the instructors identifying problems, solutions and then follow-up on students' progress.

We also make ourselves available when students just need to talk about problems. Many traditional students are away from home for the first time and feel overwhelmed at the new experience. The non-traditional students often are returning to school after many years and have unique problems in coping with university life plus their family responsibilities.

Helping students build self-confidence is another aspect of tutoring. Not only does enhanced self-confidence help in their academic endeavors, but it also helps prepare them for graduate level studies or professional careers.

Tutoring can be frustrating. Many of the students who are not performing average work do not come for help. Others wait until it is almost too late to bring their grades up to passing. When assignments are given by tutors, students either do not do the assignment or fail to return. Appointments are often missed without notice.

However, there are rewards and they outweigh the frustrations. When students come back and report that their grades have improved, students and tutors both feel a sense of pride for a job well done. A closeness develops between students, tutors and professors. An added benefit is that close friendship that develops between the tutors and supervisors. (Virginia Utter, Tom Sime, Deb Robling, February, 1989)

Lab and Studio Tutoring

Lab and studio tutoring occurred very naturally in some classes such as computer languages, drawing and painting, and computer drafting. It is a great way for tutors to draw in students for one-to-one tutoring if needed. Tutors are pleased with the results and so are students. This is only

done upon instructor's request. The following sections represent peer tutors' insights into this service.

Fine arts summaries. Tutoring art students is essential to facilitate those who require guidance in completing art assignments. These assignments include a variety of art mediums, painting printmaking, drawing, watercolor and sculpture.

I am available ten hours a week, four of these hours require pre-scheduling within established time periods. Monday, Wednesday and Friday for an hour each and Thursday for an hour. Two evenings a week I am available in art rooms in a supervisory capacity for three hours. The flexibility of previously noted times is an option, provided students contact me prior to a change. These hours available for this "flex" time necessitates scheduling outside of my own class times.

Tutoring time is utilized to facilitate the following instructional types of activities: stretching canvas for painting, matting pictures, and the proper and safe use of power tools in the sculpture lab.

Students frequently use these services to discuss ongoing class projects. Following self criticism discussions there is a potential for review of previously presented class information which often resolves problems or allows for renewed creativity on current or future assignments. These are often a learning experience for the tutor as well. (Georgie Wallace)

I am available to help students as an art tutor in Drawing I and Color Composition. Of the ten hours a week I work, six hours are spent in a class setting. During these classes I help students with projects and assist the instructor with class supervision. Both of these classes have close to 20 students and I feel having a tutor in the class gives the students more time to spend with either the instructor or the tutor discussing how they are progressing and working on a technique for their project. The students I have worked with in these classes seem to be appreciative of my help during class. These same students utilize my scheduled hours, (4) that are out of class, for assistance.

Some of the help I have provided in class has included matting procedures, demonstrations and drawing techniques in Drawing I and working with pastel and watercolor techniques in Color Composition. Both of the instructors I work with have offered me the opportunity to take an active part in the class. I really appreciate this since teaching art is what I want to do. Tutoring may be advantageous for students who need assistance, but in some respects it can be a great learning experience for the tutor also. (Kay Nielsen)

Industrial technology summary. I enjoyed my first semester as the drafting tutor. I also learned quite a bit

and think the students I tutored learned, too. With Mr. Chastain out sick for a good portion of the semester, most of my working times was spent helping out with the evening CAD classes. This could probably explain the low number of contacts with students in other areas. As for the night classes I feel, with Rick, Glenn and myself, the students received adequate instruction and all the individual help they needed to complete the work required by the course. The following is a list of contacts and returns made for each subject during the Fall semester of 1988. (Paul Peterson)

	Contacts	Returns
CAD	19	165
Technical Illus.	1	2
Graphic Communication	1	0

Sample Tutor Reports to Academic Divisions

All tutors must submit a report to the Division Chair of the division for which they tutor. We have included some of the reports for your examination. These reports are from the Science and Mathematics division. Chairs use these many times when working with their faculty. Following is a small, but representative, sampling of these reports.

To: Dr. G. Shryock, Chairman of Science and Mathematics Division

From: Mamadou Diakite

Date: December 14, 1988

RE: Math and Chemistry tutor for the Academic Skills Center

This semester has been the busiest semester I have had working at the Academic Skills Center. At the same time, it has been a rewarding experience for me since not only have I helped many people with their homework, but it has also been a period of review for me.

Here is a breakdown of the classes and the student that I have tutored this semester.

CLASSES	# OF STUDENTS
General Chemistry	26
Survey Chemistry	16
Calculus II	5
Trigonometry	8
College Algebra	37
Intermediate Algebra	16
Basic Algebra	0
CAT	10
Analytical Chemistry	4
TOTAL	123

The Academic Skills Center is one of the valuable services available to students on this campus. Compared to last year, I think that many students have been taking full advantage of it.

I would like to thank Black Hills State College for allowing me to be part of this experience.

To: Dr. Gerald Shryock
Division of Science and Mathematics

From: Melinda Vogele
Math Tutor, Academic Skills Center
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The following is a list of courses I tutored, the number of people whom I tutored in each class, and the number of return visits for the fall semester of 1988.

CLASS	STUDENTS	TOTAL RETURNS
Basic Algebra	4	10
Intermediate Algebra	7	59
College Algebra	4	7
Math/Elem. Teachers	3	40
Foundations of Math	1	1
CAT	5	10
Calculus II	1	1
Astronomy	1	1
Totals	26	129

I had three steady students who came in for tutoring on a routine basis. One was in Math for the Elementary Teacher and

she came in three times a week for a total of 38 hours. The second student was taking Intermediate Algebra and came in three hours a week for a total of 38 hours. The third student was also in Intermediate Algebra, but started coming in November so she had 13 visits.

This semester, I have found that tutoring students in small groups can work very well. This way, I can help more people in the time I am tutoring. I found this especially useful in the morning hours, because that was our busiest time.

This semester was very busy for us and we had students from every subject. We had many drop-ins as well as several students who came in on a regular basis. This semester was also unusual in the fact that we had as many traditional students as non-traditional.

I am looking forward to tutoring again in the spring and hope that it will be as rewarding and enjoyable as this semester has been.

Residence Life Peer Tutoring

Residence Life (University housing) initiated a tutor program in our four resident hall that house mostly Freshman and Sophomore students. Each hall has one English and one math tutor. They are available for eight hours of tutoring per week.

Hall residents probably are not taking as much advantage of the program as they could; however, as the program becomes more visible, we have more students taking part in the program.

The overall GPA in the Residence Halls increased from 2.10 in the fall of 1987 to 2.15 for the fall of 1988. The Residence Life office hopes that the Residence Hall Tutor Program has played a part in that increased GPA. (Gene Schlekeway, Residence Life Director)

Community Services

This serve grew from the need of so many public school students for assistance. First of all, the Dean of Student Affairs decided we should assist the children of faculty, students, and staff. This tutoring service was used occasionally, but then parents started calling for help who were not involved in any way with the college.

This challenge was met in one of two ways. First, Academic Skills Center tutors were asked if they would provide tutoring as part of their regular work load. Second, if no one had the time or inclination, new people are sought through

the division chair and faculty. These tutors must carry a recommendation of the division in which they propose to offer services.

The pay is $5 an hour. The tutors usually go to the student's home or meet in the library. After two weeks, the director asks for an evaluation from parents and tutor. This program takes little time, but has been quite successful. It is the feeling of the director that the implementation and monitoring should be improved because there is such a call for this service.

Alternate Services

Group review sessions. Test study sessions are provided at the request of the professors. The material is provided by the professor and reviewed by the tutor. An example of a test session is one that is conducted semi-monthly for the General Psychology class. After receiving the material that will be tested, the tutor makes a list of items that may need review by the class and post times for a study session. These sessions are also announced during class by the professor involved. The sessions schedule for the Friday before the test day which is usually Monday or Wednesday. This gives the student the weekend to study the material that is presented. A room is reserved by the tutor and a typical session will attract between 25 and 30 students.

During the session, the tutor will go over the material stressed by the professor as the students take notes. Many of the students then prefer to study the material on their own, but an invitation is made by the tutor to stay for a question-answer session. The tutors hours are also written on the board, inviting the students to come to the Academic Skills Center for a review of any material that may be giving them difficulty.

This service has been successful in helping improve test scores as well as giving students more confidence while taking tests. (Connie Shehan, Education Tutor)

Test anxiety component. Again, this service grew quite naturally out of student need. At first the director was not convinced that anxiety could disable a student's performance to any great degree. She decided to try it anyway. It worked. The next step was to convince the faculty. This was done by the improved performance. It soon became evident that it couldn't be faked because grade just did not improve if the student had not studied.

We first began with small seminars which were fairly effective, but scheduling a time when students could all attend was impossible. The director started giving individual sessions which were much more successful. All the students that were worked in the last semester improved. The norm was one grade level, fewer improved greatly, some going from

failing to an "A." Others progressed more slowly, but usually attained a satisfactory point. The director uses private sessions and a video tape about stress

GED review and testing. The General Education Development (GED) testing program is is a valuable service and extends the Center's services to the larger external community. Although individuals take the GED for many reasons, completion of the testing sequence opens avenues for those not completing high school to enter the University. Our institution accepts GED students on probation if they have passed the exam. Giving the GED is not a money making proposition. It cost $20 for the full exam. Upon retake it costs $4 per exam as one only has to take the sections failed. Minimum pass thresholds vary from state to state.

The chief examiner must have earned a Bachelors Degree and must set a firm schedule. The Center director serves as chief examiner and the assistant director serves as assistant examiner. The latter individual has been assigned responsibility by the former individual for administering the test. There should be a back-up examiner in case the chief examiner is unable to administer the exam. The test takes quite a time commitment: (1) Seven and one-half hours for exam; (2) One and one-half hours to mail in completed examinations; (3) Copies of all forms must be filed; and (4) A year-end report requiring about 10 hours to compile. As one can see, there is quite an investment of time, but probably not enough to hire someone exclusively for the job in small institutions.

Below are age and educational level completed statistics from 1988 GED administrations. (Janet Golliher, Assistant Director, Academic Skill Center)

Age	Number	Age	Number
17	23	25	4
18	42	28	3
19	24	29	1
20	12	31	2
21	14	36	1
22	8	41 - 49	2
23	1		

Grade	Number	Grade	Number
7th	5	10th	47
8th	18	11th	31
9th	32	12th	4

Section 2
Description of Study Skill and Development Classes

This section discusses the process by which Student Study Skills and Development (ED 010) credit classes are offered at Black Hills State University. Included here synopses of how the program originated, program objectives, a description of who teaches the classes and how they are selected, how classes are structured, and the intended target population. This section concludes with recommendations for other institutions that may be considering the implementation of a similar program.

Origination of the Program

The basic model for this program came from the book, Student-to-Student Counseling, by William F. Brown. Since its inception, this program has undergone numerous transformations. However ,the basic tenets of Brown's writings still serve as the guidelines by which this program operates.

Program Objectives

1. To help students understand the academic, personal, and social adjustments that college requires.
2. To help students understand the special challenges, opportunities, and rewards that college offers.
3. To help students assess the adequacy of current study habits and attitudes.
4. To motivate students toward developing more efficient study skills and effective academic values.
5. To improve study efficiency through better time management and study environment organization.
6. To improve study efficiency through improved reading, writing, speaking, concentration, and memory techniques.
7. To improve efficiency in preparing for and taking examinations.
8. To improve self-direction through the development of more meaningful academic behavior and motivation.
9. To help students develop a realistic approach to collegiate life and peer acceptance problems.

Program Instructors and Their Selection

Each class is instructed by a team composed of one female and one male. Both are students themselves who have filed applications with the director of the Academic Skills Center at Black Hills State University and met certain program requirements.

Applicants are subjected to the following series of assessments; if they pass all of them, they are hired. First, each applicant's records are screened to ensure that he and she meets the minimum cumulative grade-point average requirements of the program. Then the director of the Center talks to instructors in the applicant's division of study to find out as much as possible, from an academic standpoint, about the student. Then each applicant is submitted to an interview by the Center director to determine personal qualities. At this point, if the director is satisfied with all qualifications and the applicant is not to be teamed with a veteran instructor, he and she is hired. However, if the applicant is to be teamed with a student who is a veteran in the program, there is an interview of the applicant by the veteran instructor to determine compatibility. If this interview session is a success, the applicant is hired; if not, he and she is rejected.

Training of Student Instructors

The student instructors of the program learn how to teach the class through a series of training sessions with the director and veteran student instructors.

Classroom Instruction

Classroom instruction involves lectures, demonstrations, and general discussion. The student and instructors also make use of computer modules and videos which have been designed to enhance the assigned reading material from the currently used text, Becoming a Master Student, by David B. Ellis. Students are quizzed on a regular basis to promote classroom discussion, as well as to gauge the students' understanding of the material. Furthermore, students are given an extensive tour of the campus library to familiarize them with what this particular facility has to offer. The classroom work incorporates the elements below.

-- Assignments which deal with time management.
-- Ways of improving memory.
-- Methods of taking lecture notes.
-- Reading textbooks.
-- Preparing for and taking examinations.
-- Writing themes and reports.
-- How to prepare for and make oral reports.

-- Goal setting and scholastic motivation.
-- Ways to improve interpersonal relations.
-- Ways to improve concentration.
-- Getting to know instructors better through instructor interviews.
-- Library assignment which enables students to become knowledgeable of the resource.
-- Assignments which enable students to become familiar with campus organizations and other campus resources.

Target Population

All students are eligible for enrollment in these classes, regardless of academic standing or grade level. Students may elect to register for classes on their own volition or may be referred by faculty or staff.

Recommendations

Any institution considering the implementation of a program similar to the one described here should set up specific guidelines within which the program will operate. Naturally, such a program should have stated goals and objective(s). There should be specific criteria guiding the selection of instructors, and it is essential, provided the classes are to be taught by teams, that the members of each team be compatible.

Methods of training instructors should be devised and evaluated. When taught by teams, the program works best when a new instructor is matched with a veteran instructor. This reduces stress for the newcomers and allows for some degree of continuity in the program.

Finally, there should be regular meeting of the director and instructors for the sharing of ideas and the assessment of progress toward the attainment of program goals and objectives. (Philip Brown, Senior Student Instructor)

Student Instructor Summary

"Hey, do you want to be an A Student? Well, just step right up, we can show you how in twelve easy steps." Sounds like a carnival come-on doesn't it? For the 300 plus students who have taken the bait and enrolled in ED 010 over the last three semesters, it has not been just a come-on and hype. Many have done just that, although not all have become A students, the majority have gone from a D average to a B. The study skills class also offers the option of taking the class for a letter grade or for a pass/fail grade. Almost all students choose to work for the grade.

Many students leave the sheltered life of high school each year and enroll in college. For most of these students, this is their first experience away from home. As they soon learn, the academic and personal-social attitudes are wholly different at the collegiate level. In high school they were told when to go to class, what to read, how to dress and who their friends should be by their teachers and parents. In essence they were spoon fed. Now, suddenly, they are on their own for the first time to make all of these "adult" decisions for themselves. Even though the students are 18 years old and considered an adult by society, many are just not ready to handle all the pressures of college life. This is why I affectionately refer to the Study Skills component of the developmental program as college survival skills.

In addition to our new "adults," 25% of our student population at Black Hills are non-traditional students, ranging from twenty-one to sixty years of age. For the student who has been away from an academic environment for several years, returning to college can be an equally frightening experience. Will they be accepted by the young students, the professors? Do they have time to devote to studies and family, plus part-time or full-time jobs? ED 010 Undergraduate Study and Skill Development helps these students learn to cope and deal with these pressures, the same as our new "adults". This program is for everyone, to be applied to all aspects of life.

One of the overall, main objectives of the developmental program here at Black Hills State University has always been to ensure the academic success and survival of the student population. One of the greatest concerns of the college, as a whole, was the attrition rate of incoming and returning freshmen. After several years of study and observation a conclusion was reached. These kids are not lazy or stupid, THESE KIDS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO STUDY!!!! Thus, the inception of ED 010, Undergraduate Study and Skill Development. The environment of this course is unique in that, it does not use the traditional professor, but is team-taught by currently enrolled students, consisting of one male and one female. The student-instructors are carefully screened and selected before they are admitted into the study skills program. The first requirement, of course, is that they be a good students themselves. Secondly, the student-instructors must be motivators, able to take a group of 20 to 25 students and get them excited about going to class, reading texts and taking exams. And thirdly, and most importantly, the student-instructors must WANT to help their fellow students. The Developmental Program Director, has exercised great insight and care in selecting the Study Skills student-instructors over the past three semesters. She has chosen students from a broad spectrum across campus, including education majors, Business Administration, Science and Math, Communications, Special Education, and Fine Arts to lead and motivate our new "adults."

The objectives of our Study Skills Program are manifold and for the sincere student the rewards are returned one hundred times over. The study-instructor teams, with the aid of computer modules and personal experience, help these new adults learn to manage their time to maximum efficiency, read texts and take notes more profitably, and over-come test fears and anxiety.

More importantly though, these dedicated student-instructor teams help their students to improve their own self-worth and image. It is my "guesstimate" that ninety nine percent of the incoming freshmen here at Black Hills came from a high school of under 500 total students. Suddenly they are thrown from their nest, removed from life-long friends and thrust into the midst of 2200 strangers, many of them hundreds of miles from home. This can have a devastating affect, even on the best student. This is when the strongest point of ED 010, the student-instructor teams, really shine. Again, through the use of computer modules and personal experiences, the student-instructors apply compassion and understanding to help their new "adults" improve inter-personal relationships with professors and new friends, at the same time helping to improve scholastic motivation. There is no greater feeling than to watch a shy, struggling and scared student blossom and grow into an out-going, confident scholar.

The effects of the study skills program on students are visible. There is one more "hidden" plus to our study skills program at Black Hills which is not mentioned in the course description which I would like to bring out at this point. The main recipients of the study skills program are, of course, the students enrolled in the classes. The student-instructor teams spend hundreds of hours researching material and preparing for class. Many is the time when my partner, Sally Beaird, and I have stood in front of a class and wondered "are we reaching these kids, are we <u>really</u> being effective, is it really all worth it?" Then a student comes running up to you in the hall, who received a 'D' or 'F' on their first World Civilization. or Economics. test, throws their arms around you in a wild bear hug and screams "I got a 'B' on my last test!", I think of Sally's favorite quote "NO DOUBT." (Michael Mc Farland, Senior Student Instructor)

<u>Examples of Student and Faculty Research</u>

<u>Student research</u>. The following research was done in 1987 by Dewey Dahl a former student instructor for our Study Skills Class. He is now close to finishing his master's degree. This was the end result of a research project. The literature of orientation classes and study skills classes was surveyed through ERIC. These document resumes and summaries are extensive and are not included in our document. The findings of other programs are very similar to that of Black Hills State University; i.e., Study Skills does have a

positive effect on grades and retention. We do not include the orientation class statistics as they are under another program. His hypothesis was that students stay longer in college if they have completed ED 010, Undergraduate Study Skills and Development. Procedures used in this study follow.

1. A comparative study will be done using the students at Black Hills State University. A study will be done on the drop-out rate at the college, how many of the drop-students took the study skills class and how many did not.

2. The years from 1983-1987 will be studied. Drop-out rate will be compared from each year. Contact will be made with each drop-out student. Questions will be asked about their reason, why?, and if they plan to return to college. Grades (GPA) will be had from the college. I will then compare the students that take study skills class (Experimental Group) to those students that did not take any study skills (Control Group) while in college.

3. Data from the college such as GPA, number of students each year in college for each semester will be gathered. How many students take study skills class each semester? How many students that take study skills drop out of college? How many students that do not take study skills of some kind while in college and how many of them drop-out? How long were they in college? Two-year or four-year degree?

4. Experimental and control groups will be used to test the independent variables and at the end of each semester check what dependent variables appear, or change. Other research will be compared to see what difference, if any, is noted from one college to another. Compare national drop-out to Black Hills State University drop-out.

5. A line graph will be used showing difference between these students. A longitudinal study will be done for Black Hills State University Development Center starting from the year 1983 to 1989. The study will include three different areas: 1. Traditional students; 2. Non-traditional students; and 3. Study skills and peer tutor help--drop-out, or current students

This research could be used in all college and universities in the United States, as they all are having retention problems, with fewer students entering higher education.

Study Skills Enrollment Data from 1983-1987

Year	Term	# of Sections	Peer Counselors	Students
1983	FALL	4	8	47
1984	SPRING	4	8	56
1984	FALL	4	8	78
1985	SPRING	4	8	97
1985	FALL	4	8	105
1986	SPRING	4	8	107
1986	FALL	4	8	125
1987	SPRING	4	8	105
1987	SUMMER	1	1	25
	TOTALS	33	65	745

The retention rate for these students was significantly higher than that for the total student body. Of the 103 students enrolled in study skills during the fall of 1983 and spring of 1984, 83% (85) of the students graduated by 1987. The 1983 total student retention from 1983-1987 is 40%-- 855 students started in 1983, 342 students graduated in 1987.

In the fall of 1985, 995 freshmen started college, in fall of 1986, 406 students returned as sophomores--a total of 41% of the freshmen had returned. The dropout rate for freshmen in the fall of 1985 was 59%.

Faculty research. The following is the final portion of an evaluated study of the study skills pilot project in 1985 completed by Dr. Max Durgin

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of teaching a two-hour basic-skills course, team taught by quality junior and senior Black Hills State University students with the help of Computer Assisted Instruction, for the medium to low achieving student. Sixty eight student subjects were assigned to five classes of Undergraduate Study and Skills Development, ED 010, taught at Black Hills State University, Spearfish, SD during the Spring Semester of the 1985 school year.

All subjects were administered a 125 item true and false pre- and post- Effective Study Test to determine achievement

in the course. The Effective Study Test consisted of five subtests that measured Reality Orientation, Study Organization, Writing Behavior, Reading Behavior, and Examination Behavior. The packet contained an Individual Report Form so the student could plot pre and post progress on the five subtests.

A pre and post semantic differential instrument composed of 19 bi-polar adjective scales was administered to the students as a measure of attitude toward the concepts: Undergraduate Study and Skill Development and Black Hills State University. The semantic differential instrument had been previously used to measure attitude toward a course and college exhibiting a high degree of validity and reliability.

Sixty-eight random students with similar college grade point or ACT scores and college credit hours that have never participated in the CARP project were identified. These students were compared to the students that participated in the CARP project on enrolling at Black Hills State University during the Spring Semester 1985. Data was collected based on Fall Semester 1985 enrollment.

Hypothesis one was that "there will be no significant differences among the retention of freshmen students taught ED 010 and those students of equal academic ability enrolled in the traditional college courses."

After the Fall 1985 enrollment was completed, the sixty-eight students in the control group and the sixty eight students that had enrolled in the CARP program during the spring semester of 1985 were assessed as to "enrolled in school fall semester 1985" or "not enrolled in school fall semester 1985." The contingency table below illustrates the results.

	ENROLLED	NOT ENROLLED	
CARP	46	22	68
CONTROL	38	30	68
TOTALS	84	52	136

The contingency table yielded a Chi square value of 1.99 with one degree of freedom. The Chi square table indicates the difference between proportions is significant at about the 20 percent level, but not significant at the 10 or 5 percent level.

Hypothesis two was that "there will be no significant differences among grade point averages of freshmen students taught ED 010 and those students of equal academic ability enrolled in the traditional college courses." When the Spring

Semester grades were completed, the sixty-eight randomly selected students Spring Semester grades were compared to the Spring Semester grades of the students that participated in the CARP project. A T-test was used to identify significance beyond the .01 level. The mean score of Spring Semester grades for the CARP group was 2.368 and the mean scores for Spring Semester grades for the control group was 1.526. The statistics with 134 degrees of freedom produced a T value of 4.632514 which rejects the null hypotheses at any level.

Hypothesis three was that "there will be no significant change in attitude toward Black Hills State University among the students while enrolled in ED 010." A T-test comparing the pretest and post-test Semantic Differential indicated that there was no significant change in attitude toward the concept of Black Hills State University during the duration of the course. The mean score for the pretest was 103.76 and the mean score for the post test was 103.95. These statistics with 84 degrees of freedom for 43 students yielded a T value of .049697.

Hypothesis four was that "there will be no significant change in attitude toward the course UNDERGRADUATE STUDY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT among the students while enrolled in ED 010." The T-test on the pre- and post- test scores on the Semantic Differential toward the concept Undergraduate Study Skill Development indicated that there was significant change in attitude toward this concept beyond the .01 level. Of the sixty-eight students in the CARP program, forty-two students took both the pre- and post-test. The mean score for the pretest was 98.99 and the mean score for the post test was 107.74 that yielded a T ration of 2.750 with a rejection of the null level at .007.

Hypothesis five was that "there will be no significant differences in student knowledge of effective study methods while enrolled in ED 010." The T-test on the pre- and post-test scores of the students in the Fall Semester group on the Effective Study Test indicated a significant change in students knowledge of effective study methods beyond the .01 level. Forty-seven CARP students took both the pre and post test. The mean score on the pretest was 19.51, and the mean scores on the post-test was 21.43. With 84 degrees of freedom the T value was 3.3246 with a rejection level at .002. (Dr. Max Durgin, Computer Education Specialist)

Section 3
Conclusion and Recommendations

This opportunity to share our work with other practitioners is rare and welcome. The Academic Skill Center has been developed in the absence of external funds. The Center must do what is important for our students with limited funds, but other constraints on our development are minimal. The narrative of our program is straightforward and discusses both our success and our lack of it. Some of our problems have been consistent and we still search for solutions. We seek and invite your questions and solutions. Following are suggestions for others interested in launching a peer tutoring center. (Betty Marie Anderson, Director, Academic Skill Center)

-- Open up your organization. Let it belong to the faculty and students. Treat your assistant director better than best.

-- Seek advice of division chairs and professors. In fact, meet with them personally and whenever appropriate, ask to attend discussion meetings. When you do, keep your remarks short and to the point.

-- Seek criticism and new ideas from peers and tutors. Act on it.

-- Take time with students and staff in a personal one-to-one. Do not check your watch all of the time. Meet with the staff as a group. Have an agenda; keep to it if possible, but welcome input. One hour or 50-minute meetings are best.

-- Look great everyday--dress your part, keep your workplace attractive. It can look different that the rest of the school.

-- Display student art and sell it for students. Many people will buy art on time, especially students. Keep the piece until it is paid for.

-- Have a party at least once a semester in the Center. Invite everyone. Have one at your home for tutors.

-- Give lots of recognition and write many, many thank you notes.

-- Be willing to try the impossible.

-- Be sure everyone in your center understands the rules;

be sure everyone keeps them.

-- Share reports and successes with the administration, since after all, you are an administrator, too.

-- Try to keep calm because so much happens all the time.

-- Watch the location of the center. It should be at the heart of the academic area for easy access to faculty and students. This rule is important to observe.